


MODULE 3 -
UNDERSTANDING THE SIX-
POINT HOLISTIC-SCORING
RUBRIC FOR THE ACT
WRITING TEST
TEACHER RESOURCES TO PREPARE /
UNDERSTAND ... ACT PLUS WRITING TEST




...

Understand the writing descriptors for each of the six levels on the Six-point Holistic Rubric

FRAMING OUR LEARNING

- 30 minute essay test with a single prompt question
- Prompt briefly states an issue and describes two points of view on that issue
- Prompt is designed to be appropriate for responses in a 30-minute timed test and to reflect students' interests and experiences
- Prompt designed to evaluate student's ability in addressing the 5 criteria



PROMPT FOR TODAY'S WORK

Educators debate extending high school to five years because of increasing demands on students from employers and colleges to participate in extracurricular activities and community service in addition to having high grades. Some educators support extending high school to five years because they think students need more time to achieve all that is expected of them. Other educators do not support extending high school to five years because they think students would lose interest in school and attendance would drop in the fifth year. In your opinion should high school be extended to five years?

In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

QUESTION ASKED:

IN YOUR OPINION SHOULD HIGH SCHOOL BE EXTENDED TO FIVE YEARS?

1. *Some educators support extending high school to five years because they think students need more time to achieve all that is expected of them.*
2. *Other educators do not support extending high school to five years because they think students would lose interest in school and attendance would drop in the fifth year.*

SIX-POINT HOLISTIC RUBRIC

Score	Description
6	...The essay is exceptionally well developed, with a clear and compelling thesis statement, and the writer provides a wealth of relevant and specific evidence to support the thesis. The writing is highly organized, with a clear and logical flow of ideas, and the language is sophisticated and precise.
5	...The essay is well developed, with a clear thesis statement, and the writer provides a wealth of relevant and specific evidence to support the thesis. The writing is well organized, with a clear and logical flow of ideas, and the language is sophisticated and precise.
4	...The essay is developed, with a clear thesis statement, and the writer provides a wealth of relevant and specific evidence to support the thesis. The writing is organized, with a clear and logical flow of ideas, and the language is sophisticated and precise.
3	...The essay is developed, with a clear thesis statement, and the writer provides a wealth of relevant and specific evidence to support the thesis. The writing is organized, with a clear and logical flow of ideas, and the language is sophisticated and precise.
2	...The essay is developed, with a clear thesis statement, and the writer provides a wealth of relevant and specific evidence to support the thesis. The writing is organized, with a clear and logical flow of ideas, and the language is sophisticated and precise.
1	...The essay is developed, with a clear thesis statement, and the writer provides a wealth of relevant and specific evidence to support the thesis. The writing is organized, with a clear and logical flow of ideas, and the language is sophisticated and precise.

Papers at each level exhibit all or most of the characteristics described at each score point

THE DESCRIPTORS

- ✓ Understanding of the task
- ✓ Developing a position
- ✓ Focusing on the topic
- ✓ Organizing Ideas
- ✓ Using language

PAPER A

In this essay I am writing about that school should be extended for five year. I think that school should be extended for five year because it will help you how you are educate. The school for five year will help you a lot when you are doing something. The school for five year could help you in most everything that you are doing. I think that if you go to school for five years you could learn a lot of skills. School could help you out of most anything that you want to do in this world. School could teach you how to be educator. By going to school is a good thing because if you go to school it could help have experience in everything that you are doing. To have experience you to do that thing you do best and how well you do at it. I think that school could teach you how to have experience in everything you are doing. I know that to go to school you have to choice to go to school because nobody can make you go to school. I now that school are not for everyone but I think that every children should go to school because if you don't go to school you will not be educate. I know that when you have an education it is a good thing. School is a place where you could learn a lot of different that you don't know. I know that I learn a lot of thing I didn't know but I know them. By going to school you make new friends, and you see a lot of different people like people that is not from the United States. At school you do class work and do all type of assignment your teacher told you to do. I believe that every students should learn to be educator because you need education in this world. School shouldn't be a place where students fights. I think that every students should like going to school.

SIX-POINT HOLISTIC RUBRIC

SCORE = 1

- Essays within this score range show little or no skill in responding to the task
 - The essay shows little or no understanding of the task. If the essay takes a position, it fails to convey reasons to support that position. The essay is minimally developed. The essay may include excessive repetition of the writer's ideas or of ideas in the prompt. Focus on the general topic is usually maintained, but focus on the specific issue in the prompt may not be maintained. There is little or no evidence of an organizational structure or of the logical grouping of ideas. Transitions are rarely used. If present, an introduction and conclusion are minimal. Sentence structure and word choice are simple. Errors may be frequently distracting and may significantly impede understanding.

SCORE = 2

- Essays within this score range demonstrate inconsistent or weak skill in responding to the task
 - The essay shows a weak understanding of the task. The essay may not take a position on the issue, or the essay may take a position but fail to convey reasons to support that position, or the essay may take a position but fail to maintain a stance. There is little or no recognition of a counterargument to the writer's position. The essay is thinly developed. If examples are given, they are general and may not be clearly relevant. The essay may include extensive repetition of the writer's ideas or of ideas in the prompt. Focus on the general topic is maintained, but focus on the specific issue in the prompt may not be maintained. There is some indication of an organizational structure, and some logical grouping of ideas within parts of the essay is apparent. Transitions, if used, are simple and obvious, and they may be inappropriate or misleading. An introduction and conclusion are discernible but minimal. Sentence structure and word choice are usually simple. Errors may be frequently distracting and may sometimes impede understanding.

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PAPER B

I believe high school is a great time for students to decide what they want for there future. Some need more time than others so I believe one more year of high school added is a good idea for some students. One more year of school will take stress off of many students because they won't have to cram packed schedules. This extra year will also give students more time to participate in sports, fine arts, or any type of clubs they're interested in.

I also believe that one more year in high school is unnecessary for some if they have already been accepted to colleges and know what they want to do with their future. I think if one more year of school is offered it should depend on your grades and what all you have done with the past four years that decides if you have to go another year. I believe you shouldn't have to if you have made A's and B's all four years, because you are ready to go on. This is just my view on things, I hope I have been of some assistance to your decision.

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SCORE = 3

- Essays within this score range demonstrate some developing skill in responding to the task.
 - The essay shows some understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue, but does not offer a context for discussion. The essay may acknowledge a counterargument to the writer's position, but its development is brief or unclear. Development of ideas is limited and may be repetitious, with little, if any, movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the general topic is maintained, but focus on the specific issue in the prompt may not be maintained. The organization of the essay is simple. Ideas are logically grouped within parts of the essay, but there is little or no evidence of logical sequencing of ideas. Transitions, if used, are simple and obvious. An introduction and conclusion are easily discernable but underdeveloped. Language shows a basic control. Sentences show a little variety and word choice is appropriate. Errors may be distracting and may occasionally impede understanding.

PAPER C

Educators debate extending high school to five years because of increasing demands on students from employers and colleges to participate in extracurricular activities and community service in addition to having high grades. Some educators support extending high school to five years because they think students need more time to achieve all that is expected of them. Other educators do not support extending high school to five years because they think students would lose interest in school and attendance would drop in the fifth year. Both sides have strong points, but I agree with the educators who say that their shouldn't be an extension to high adding a fifth year.

I agree that high school should not be made up of a fifth year because I agree with those people who say that students would lose interest. Some adolescents are already losing interest in school and an increasing number of students are becoming dropouts. Being an high school student myself, it is hard and some students don't realize their full potential and think it's easier to give up than to succeed. I think adding an extra year to high school would increase the number of dropouts a year, create very serious attendance dilemmas, and cause student's interest in school to decline.

I also feel that there should not be another year to high school because I just feel that it should be a job of the instructors at an high school to prepare us, high school students, for college within those four years of high school. I feel that creating another year to high school would decrease that teacher's interest and they would do a poor job and wait until the fifth year to make up for their mistakes. The teacher should have the need to do their best to prepare us for college and careers within the four years of high school.

I just think that five years is too long and students would get bored with school. Their drive would definitely decline. Students would lose interest and attendance would drop. The students would become dropouts. Educators should not extend high school with a fifth year to fully prepare students for college.

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I agree that high school should not be made up of a fifth year because I agree with those people who say that students would lose interest. Some adolescence are already losing interest in school and an increasing number of students are becoming dropouts. Being an high school student myself, I have seen some students don't realize their full potential and think it is easier to give up than to succeed—I think adding an extra year to high school would increase the number of dropouts a year, create very serious attendance problems, and cause students' interest in school to decline.

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I just think that five years is too long and students would get bored with school. Their drive would definitely decline. Students would become restless and impatient about drop. The students would become dropouts. Educators should not extend high school with a fifth year to fully prepare students for college.

SIX-POINT HOLISTIC RUBRIC

SCORE = 3

- Essays within this score range demonstrate some developing skill in responding to the task.

The essay shows some understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue, but does not offer a context for discussion. The essay may acknowledge a counterclaim to the writer's position, but its development is brief or unclear. Development of ideas is limited and may be repetitive, with little, if any, movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the general topic is maintained, but focus on the specific issue in the prompt may not be maintained. The organization of the essay is simple. Ideas are logically grouped within parts of the essay, but there is little or no evidence of logical sequencing of ideas. Transitions, if used, are simple and obvious. An introduction and conclusion are clearly discernible but underdeveloped. Language shows a basic control. Sentences show little variety and word choice is appropriate. Errors may be distracting and may occasionally impede understanding.

SCORE = 4

- Essays within this score range demonstrate adequate skill in responding to the task.

The essay shows an understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and the other side's position for discussion. The essay may show some recognition of counterarguments to the writer's position. Development of ideas is adequate, with some movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained throughout most of the essay. The organization of the essay is apparent but predictable. Some evidence of logical sequencing of ideas is apparent, although most transitions are simple and obvious. The introduction and conclusion are clear and somewhat developed. Language is accurate, with some sentence variety and appropriate word choice. There may be some distracting errors, but they do not impede understanding.

PAPER D

There is often debate about education. Despite those who oppose the proposition I think that extending high school to five years would have a positive effect on our nation. In addition to having an extra year to try more extracurricular activities and community service opportunities, I would allow people that cannot pay for a college education to further their education and have a chance to land a better job. The extra year would certainly help high school students to achieve all that is expected of them.

Many high schoolers don't have time for extracurricular activities or community service. Adding a year to high school would help high schoolers in finding an activity or sport that is right for them. This would help students a lot. High schoolers in extracurricular activities have been proven to do better in school, partly because of pass-to-play roles. Extracurricular activities also help high schoolers make friends, who encourage teens to come to school and help make school more fun. Friends also help teens feel better about themselves. If out-of-school activities can help high schoolers so much, we should let them have more opportunities to get involved in them.

Another reason for extending the high school education is for people that can't afford to go to college right out of high school. Further education would help these people to get a leg up on competition when they apply for a job. A better job means better pay, so college may not just be a dream for these people. Also, another year would allow high achievers to do even better, separating them from others. This would make it easier for colleges when it comes to selecting students for admission. It allows hard workers to appeal to colleges even if they are not rich.

Overall, a fifth year of high school would give us a better educated society. Employers would be less likely to hire someone with only four years of high school than someone with five years, thus increasing competition and driving student to stand out from the crowd. High schoolers that are serious about their future will have the opportunity to show this to colleges and employers. Extending high school is the right thing to do.

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Another reason for extending the high school education is for people that can't afford to go to college right out of high school. Further education would help these people to get a leg up on competition when they apply for a job. A better job means better pay so finding that not just be a dream for these people. Also, another year without high schoolers to do even better, separating them from others. This would make it easier for colleges when it comes to admitting new students to admission. It allows hard workers to appeal to colleges even if they are not a job.

Overall, a fifth year of high school would give us a better educated society. Employers would be less likely to hire someone with only four years of high school than someone with five years, thus increasing competition and driving students to stand out from the crowd. High schoolers that are serious about their future will have the opportunity to show this to colleges and employers. Extending high school is the right thing to do.

SIX-POINT HOLISTIC RUBRIC

SCORE = 4

- Essays within this score range demonstrate adequate skill in responding to the task.
 - The essay shows an understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and may offer some context for discussion. The essay may show some recognition of complexity by providing some recognition of counterarguments to the writer's position. Development of ideas is adequate, with some movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained throughout most of the essay. The organization of the essay is apparent but predictable. Some evidence of logical sequencing of ideas is apparent, although most transitions are simple and obvious. The introduction and conclusion are clear and somewhat developed. Language is adequate, with some sentences being varied and appropriate word choice. There may be some distracting errors, but they do not impede understanding.

SCORE = 5

- Essays within this score range demonstrate adequate skill in responding to the task.
 - The essay shows a clear understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and may offer a focused context for discussion. The essay shows some recognition of complexity by partially evaluating the implications and/or complications of the issue, or by responding to counterarguments to the writer's position. Development of ideas is specific and logical. Most ideas are elaborated, with clear movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained. The organization of the essay is clear, although it may be predictable. Ideas are logically sequenced, although simple and obvious transitions may be used. The introduction and conclusion are clear and generally well developed. Language is competent. Sentences are clear and word choice is sometimes varied and precise. There may be a few errors, but they are rarely distracting.

PAPER E

The expectations of colleges are relative to the length of one's high school experience. Extending high school to five years, as some educators propose doing in order to reduce the pressure experienced by college-bound students, will in fact increase the pressure put on high schoolers, because colleges will expect even more. It is illogical to believe that college expectations will stay the same while high schools are granting their students a sort of extension.

When these expectations rise, it will not be impossible for dropout rates to skyrocket. Some students who do not plan to attend college may find five years of high school too long to wait before joining the work force, and leave school early, along with those who normally would not finish even a four year high school. The extended pressure would also set the stage for talented and intelligent students to "burn out" and lose sight of their goals, resulting in sad ends for high school careers that were promising before the extension year "improvement" was adopted. There may even be parents who disagree strongly and will remove their children from school. All of these factors would affect school attendance rates in a derogatory manner, which in turn hurts funding, which in turn hurts every part of the system – especially the students.

Teaching, too, will suffer under the proposed extension. Already in this state there are teacher shortages in the public school system. In private schools, most teachers are working without a "free period" for six or seven classes. Yet, there are more and more teachers available each year, but they would not be enough to compensate for such an increased demand as a fifth year of high school would require. The caliber of teachers in the classrooms would inevitably decrease as schools scrape the bottom of the barrel in order to fill their quires. Undermining the quality of teaching hardly seems something that will better prepare students for high achievement, no matter how long they spend in the classroom.

I believe that extending high school to five years would not be a wise decision. Colleges will add more requirements to their already lengthy list of demands, high schoolers will be more apt to drop out, and teachers would be difficult to find, especially exemplary ones. Anyone of these factors should be enough to deter any high school from attempting this educational suicide, no matter how well-meaning the action would be.

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When these expectations rise, it will not be impossible for dropout rates to skyrocket. Some students who do not plan to attend college may find five years of high school too long to wait before going to work, and leave school early, along with those who normally would not finish even a four-year high school. The extended pressure would also set the stage for talented and intelligent students to "burn out" and lose sight of their goals, leading to bad ends to high school careers that were promising before the extension year. Colleges would make adjustments--there may even be parents who disagree strongly and will remove their children from school. All of these factors would affect school attendance rates in a derogatory manner, which in turn hurts those who, in turn, hurts every part of the system--especially the students.

Teachers, too, will suffer under this proposed extension. Already in this state there are teacher shortages in the public school system. In private schools, most teachers are working without a "five period" for six or seven periods. When there are more and more students enrolling each year that may mean more teachers to compensate for each year's greater demand as a fifth year of high school would require. The caliber of teachers in the classrooms would inevitably decrease as schools struggle to battle all the talent in order to fill their quota. Undermining the quality of teaching hardly seems something that will better prepare students for high achievement, no matter how long they spend in the classroom.

I believe that extending high school to five years would not be a wise decision. Colleges will add more requirements to their already lengthy list of demands, high schools will be more apt to drop out, and teachers would be difficult to find, especially exemplary ones. Any one of these factors should be enough to deter any high school from attempting this educational suicide, no matter how well-meaning the action would be.

SIX-POINT HOLISTIC RUBRIC

SCORE = 5

- Essays within this score range demonstrate adequate skill in responding to the task.
 - The essay shows a clear understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and may offer at least minimal discussion. The essay shows some recognition of complexity by partially evaluating the implications and/or complications of the issue, or by responding to counterarguments to the writer's position. Development of ideas is specific and logical. Most ideas are elaborated, with clear movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained. The organization of the essay is clear, although it may be predictable. Ideas are logically sequenced, although simple and obvious transitions may be used. The introduction and conclusion are clear and generally well developed. Language is competent. Sentences are somewhat varied and word choice is sometimes varied and precise. There may be a few errors, but they are rarely distracting.

SCORE = 6

- Essays within this score range demonstrate effective skill in responding to the task.
 - The essay shows a clear understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and offers a critical, coherent, or by evaluating the implications and/or complication of the writer's position. Development of ideas is simple, specific, and logical. Most ideas are fully elaborated. A clear focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained. The organization of the essay is clear: the organization may be somewhat predictable or it may grow from the writer's purpose. Ideas are logically sequenced. Most transitions reflect the writer's logic and are usually integrated into the essay. The introduction and conclusion are effective, clear and well developed. The essay shows a good command of language. Sentences are varied and word choice is varied and precise. There are few, if any errors to distract the reader.

PAPER F

When studying Matthew, Derring, and Taylor, one thing is clear: needs lead to motivation. If there is a need and a desire to learn, then the subject will be motivated enough to do so. Although educators debate whether to add a fifth year to the high school education, it is clear to see that school should not extend another year, long-term is not the incorrect variable in the equation, motivation is.

Studies indicate that more and more American students are entering college with nominal requirements or are not attending college at all. Trends in test scores show students don't know what they should know. Meanwhile that malignant fat continues to rock our nation: the high school dropout. Yet who is to say that fifteen instead of twelve years of education will make a difference?

How many times as a student have you blamed a bad grade on an unfair test? Or as a parent how many times have you heard complaints from your teenager about the insufficient qualifications, and underdeveloped teaching techniques of his or her teacher as an explanation for a bad grade? Students have armed themselves with excuses for their academic performances that place the blame far from their own poor efforts. If students had motivation and a desire to learn instead of excuses, the duration of schooling could actually be cut down a couple of years instead of extended as some educators propose.

The problem in our school system is the way students approach their own education. I can attest that often students do work just for the grade and not to retain knowledge. Is that any way to learn? Perhaps that is why the United States is one of the nations with the highest literacy rates. Although at times schools may be responsible for decisions not in the students' best interest (for example, the habitual couch teaching theory because the school could not afford to look for a better qualified employee), it's important to note that more often my fellow students and I may not care enough to put any effort into our own education, thus depriving ourselves of knowledge and a future.

While educators debate adding a year to high school, the real issue less untouched and students' apathy remains unchallenged. Whether they spend twelve, fifteen, or thirty years in the educational system, nothing is more important than motivation in order for students to achieve all that is expected of them.

PAPER F

When we read Newton, Leibniz, and Taylor, one thing is clear: needs lead to motivation. If there is a need and it **DEBATE** to learn, then, the subject will be motivated enough to do so. Although educators debate whether to add a fifth year to the high school education, it is **DEBATE** to see that school should not extend another year, long-term is not the incorrect variable in the equation, motivation is.

Students indicate that more and more students are not motivated to learn or are not attending college at all. Trends in test scores show students don't know what they are doing. **DEBATE** to see that school should not extend another year, long-term is not the incorrect variable in the equation, motivation is.

How many times as a student have you blamed a bad grade on an unfair test? Or as a parent how many times have you heard complaints from your teenager about the insufficient qualifications, and underdeveloped teaching techniques of his or her teacher as an explanation for a bad grade? Students have armed themselves with excuses for their students' performance that place the blame far from their own poor efforts. If students had motivation and a desire to learn instead of excuses, the duration of schooling could actually be cut down a couple of years instead of extended as some educators propose.

The problem in our school system is the way students approach their own education. I can attest that often students do work just for the grade and not to learn knowledge, as that is the way to learn. Perhaps that is why the school system is one of the nations with the highest literacy rates. Although at times schools may be responsible for decisions from the students' perspective (for example, the harshness of teaching Geometry because the school could not afford to hire a better qualified employee, it's important to note that more often my fellow students and I may not care enough to put any effort into or own education, thus depriving ourselves of knowledge and a future.

While educators debate adding a year to high school, the real issue lies untouched and students' apathy remains unchallenged. Whether they spend twelve, fifteen, or thirty years in the educational system, nothing is more important than motivation in order for students to achieve all that is expected of them.

SIX-POINT HOLISTIC RUBRIC

SCORE = 5

- Essays within this score range demonstrate adequate skill in responding to the task.
 - The essay shows a clear understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and may offer a broad context for discussion. The essay shows some recognition of complexity by partially evaluating the implications and/or complications of the issue, or by responding to counterarguments to the writer's position. Development of ideas is specific and logical. Most ideas are elaborated, with clear movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained. The organization of the essay is clear, although it may be predictable. Ideas are logically sequenced, although simple and obvious. transitions may be used. The introduction and conclusion are clear and generally well developed. Language is competent. Sentences are somewhat varied and word choice is sometimes varied and precise. There may be a few errors, but they are rarely distracting.

SCORE = 6

- Essays within this score range demonstrate effective skill in responding to the task.
 - The essay shows a clear understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and may offer a critical context for discussion. The essay addresses complexity by examining different perspectives on the issue, or by evaluating the implications and/or complication of the writer's position. Development of ideas is simple, specific, and logical. Most ideas are fully elaborated. A clear focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained. The organization of the essay is clear; the organization may be somewhat predictable or it may grow from the writer's purpose. Ideas are logically sequenced. Most transitions reflect the writer's logic and are usually integrated into the essay. The introduction and conclusion are effective, clear and well developed. The essay shows a good command of language. Sentences are varied and word choice is varied and precise. There are few, if any errors to distract the reader.

OUTCOME

- Understand the writing descriptors for each of the six levels on the Six-point Holistic Rubric



THANKS FOR YOUR TIME AND INTEREST TODAY

“A well-crafted assignment does not ensure outcomes, but it certainly sets the stage for results. Ultimately students depend on your instruction to learn and produce the quality product you've assigned. When you teach intentionally and with skill, your students will grow intellectually and in other ways, becoming more independent as learners and, not inconsequentially, meeting expectation embedded in standards and the curriculum.”
